

The House Committee on Education offers the following substitute to HB 1229:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Code Section 20-2-157 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to uniform reporting system for high school grades for certain purposes, so as to provide for legislative findings; to provide for the adjustment of grades received in advance placement and honors courses; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) The State of Georgia has a compelling interest in the capabilities and intellectual development of its high school students across the state;

(2) The General Assembly has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to secondary and higher education in the State of Georgia, as particularly evidenced in both the longevity of the HOPE scholarship program and in the development of one of the finest university systems in this country;

(3) In order to sustain this level of commitment to education, it is of paramount importance to strengthen the intellect of high school students in Georgia and to encourage them to take the most demanding courses possible to challenge their academic abilities;

(4) A study should be conducted to determine whether disparity exists in the levels of rigor in honors classes across the state and to ensure parity throughout the state;

(5) In the interim, the law of the state should in no way dissuade the interests of students in taking such rigorous academic courses out of fear that doing so would jeopardize academic ranking for their ability to obtain a HOPE scholarship; and

(6) In order to encourage students to challenge themselves to the best of their abilities, grades in those high school classes throughout the state with an accelerated workload should be augmented for the purposes of HOPE scholarship eligibility.

SECTION 2.

Code Section 20-2-157 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to uniform reporting system for high school grades for certain purposes, is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

"(b) Beginning May 1, 2007, each school system and private school shall adopt the reporting system described in this subsection for purposes of identifying and qualifying graduating seniors for the HOPE scholarship program and other programs identified in this Code section:

(1) Each school system and private school shall transmit, in a manner and at times prescribed by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, an electronic transcript of courses and course grades for each graduating senior that reflects the complete high school academic record of the student, including scores on any state tests required for graduation, the grading scales used by the school system or private school for the time periods referenced by the transcripts, and any other pertinent information as determined by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Each grade reported by a school system or private school to the commission for the purpose of calculating the grade point average for HOPE scholarship eligibility shall be the actual grade earned by the student, with no weighting or addition of points by the local school system or private school;

(2) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate a grade point average for the purpose of determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship from these electronic transcripts and shall notify students of their eligibility and high schools as to the eligibility of students;

(3) For students otherwise qualified and enrolling as freshmen students in eligible public or private postsecondary institutions for the first time on May 1, 2007, or thereafter, the Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate grade point averages for determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship and other scholarships referenced in this Code section as follows:

(A) For students receiving a college preparatory diploma, each grade for a student in attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language that would, if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement for the college preparatory curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0, and a grade of 'F' = 0; or

(B) For students receiving a career/technical diploma, each grade for a student in attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, and social studies that would, if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement for the career/technical

curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0, and a grade of 'F' = 0.

Grades for coursework that is classified as advanced placement, honors, or international baccalaureate shall be weighted by the Georgia Student Finance Commission in calculating the overall grade point averages for students, ~~provided that the weighting of such course grades is uniformly applied to all students in the state taking the specified coursework~~ by adding an additional 0.5 to a grade of 'C' or better received by the student in such class. The sum of the equated grades shall be divided by the number of course grades, adjusted for term length, to yield a grade point average on a 4.0 scale;

(4) Qualification for the HOPE scholarship shall be determined from the grade point average calculated as set out in paragraph (3) of this subsection. Beginning May 1, 2007, students with grade point averages equal to or in excess of 3.0 on the 4.0 scale with a college preparatory diploma shall meet achievement standards for the HOPE scholarship; students receiving a career/technical diploma shall meet achievement standards for the HOPE scholarship with a grade point average equal to or in excess of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale. This paragraph shall apply regardless of when a student graduated from high school and regardless of such student's eligibility status prior to May 1, 2007; and

(5) Beginning May 1, 2007, only the reporting system as indicated in this subsection shall be used to determine eligibility for all grants, scholarships, or loans to attend colleges or universities which are administered pursuant to Article 7 of Chapter 3 of this title and eligibility for enrollment in postsecondary courses pursuant to Code Section 20-2-161.1."

SECTION 3.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.